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E.O.12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: KOSOVO DOMINATES BELGRADE COE MEETING

11. (U) Summary: Serbian President Boris Tadic and Foreign Minister Vuk Jeremic used their speeches at the opening of the 1000th meeting of the CoE Ministers' Deputies to reiterate the GOS' position on Kosovo, advertise recent cooperation with The Hague, emphasize Serbia's sincere commitment to continuing that cooperation, and assure the audience that the European Union is Serbia's future. Despite the support shown for Serbia's European future, both speeches reaffirmed the fact that no one in the DS camp is prepared to deviate from the DSS-driven Kosovo policy -- or to miss an opportunity to elucidate it. End summary.

12. Conference overview: The 1000th meeting of the Ministers' Deputies of the Council of Europe was held at the Federation Palace in Belgrade, with the opening session on June 22. The program included a review of the state of democracy in Europe, the Council of Europe's role for the future and the process of South East European cooperation. The conference was attended primarily by the Ministers' Deputies of Council of Europe members and received substantial domestic news coverage.

13. (U) FM Jeremic's remarks were broadly in keeping with the DS' and GOS' focus on European integration, democratic values, human rights and tolerance, emphasizing that solid majorities of peoples of Europe have now rejected electing nationalist, extremist political parties. He emphasized Serbia's new dedication to full cooperation with ICTY, and identified EU accession as "Serbia's central strategic priority". His remarks closed, though, with Kosovo, warning that all the achievements to date hang in the balance if its status is not resolved. After all the standard talking points of the GOS' position, he advocated for a European solution and concluded -- with a heavy dramatic pause -- "this solution cannot be independence."

14. (U) Tadic's remarks paralleled Jeremic's, and included vows to cooperate with The Hague to locate and apprehend the remaining fugitives. On Kosovo, Tadic asserted the importance of respecting Serbia's territorial integrity and sovereignty, and encouraged a solution that includes "broadest autonomy" for the province. He expressed faith in the European community to assist in finding such a solution, saying that Europe has always been able to find creative solutions to various conflicts, and that he hoped it would be so in this case as well.

15. (SBU) Comment: Tadic's remarks were his usual generally pro-Western talking points, but also toed the Kostunica-led line on Kosovo policy. He emphasized his offer of "broadest" autonomy (slightly further than the

usual GOS call "broad" or "substantial" autonomy, but as always without concrete suggestions), and again indicated willingness to find any status solution that keeps Kosovo within Serbia's borders. Jeremic, meanwhile, went further than simply adhering to the GOS party line, clashing with the rest of the speech's positive vision of European integration and supporting the FM's private assertions that "earning the Prime Minister's trust" is a priority for him. Bottom line, both Tadic and Jeremic continue in lockstep with Kostunica on Kosovo, and Kosovo will continue to be the primary topic even for those who purport to be preparing Serbia for a European future.

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